

Clarkston, Michigan is a nice looking town. Main Street is littered with small shops set in buildings that look as if “nook and cranny” were the operating words. An old church towards the middle of Main Street now functions as an award winning restaurant and bar; another old church as a home for the mayor down the street of Clarkston. The police and fire station is carefully tucked away into unseen corners of the town to make sure that violence and fire are far from the residents’ minds. The subdivisions around Clarkston look like they’ve all been decorated by Martha Stewart, herself. Their lawns are a well-manicured sea of soft green grass and huge boulders add character to the geography of the properties. Bushes, trees, and other foliage are carefully planted around each house to accentuate their brickwork and wood accents. The in-ground sprinkler systems seem to be almost synchronized on slow summer days. Clarkston is a very nice looking town there’s only one drawback to living there, the people of Clarkston are jerks. As a result, I had grown up to be very cynical, act callous, and almost cruel myself.

My family moved to Clarkston the summer before I was in fifth grade. My father's very important and highly vague job with Daimler Chrysler had transferred him again this time to Michigan. I'd lived in Delaware, Wisconsin, Illinois, and in Missouri before Michigan and by this point I was used to packing up and having to move somewhere new. Moving seemed easy, the kids were always nice, and I usually had a whole gang of new friends within a few days. Clarkston was different, the first day of school in Clarkston some kid teased me, and purposely ripped me up on the soccer field. I wasn't welcome here.

Time went by, and I just faded into the background at school. I maintained average grades, nothing special enough to get me noticed, but nothing so bad as to get me in any trouble. I had one friend, and he was a loser. Even the people at church seemed mean and unfriendly. I always had a severe suspicion that I was being stared at by some of the older members of the congregation, especially during the offering. I'd occasionally hear them making snide comments about other old people in the church. "Harold, did you hear that Margaret uses orange juice *from concentrate* in her holiday punch?" or "She actually *bleaches* her moustache, really". Eventually, I reached age thirteen and started high school at Clarkston Senior High School, and my life changed.